

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are currently pending in the present application. In this Amendment "A", Applicant has amended claims 1-5, canceled claim 6 and added new claims 7-14. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application in its current format.

In response to the Office action, Applicant has amended the claims and the specification to better meet the formal requirements of U.S. practice. More specifically, Applicant has amended the specification to add headings and has amended claims 1-5 to more positively recite the claimed elements and better meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Applicant submits that the amendments to the specification address the Examiner's objection to the specification.

In the Office action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,553,555 to Green et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,392,142 to Uzuka et al. The Examiner cites the Green et al. patent as showing all of the features of the claims, except for the "plug-in contacts" being divided into three groups, which the Examiner cites the Uzuka et al. patent as showing. Applicant traverses this rejection for at least the reasons set forth below.

The Green et al. patent discloses a computer system 100 that includes a CPU 102 mounted to a motherboard 404. A pair of memory expansion cards 402 are plugged into a pair of connectors 306 mounted to the motherboard 404. In-line memory modules 300, in turn, are mounted to the memory expansion cards 402. Each of the connectors 306 has a plurality of pins 308 extending therefrom. The Green et al. patent does not disclose the communication between the memory

expansion cards 402 and the motherboard 404 as being fixed or configurable, let alone as being configurable by the CPU 102.

The Uzuka et al. patent discloses a wiring board mounting structure 50 having a back panel 51 with a plurality of front connectors 54 and a plurality of rear connectors 55. A plurality of front wiring boards 53 are mounted to the back panel 51 via the front connectors 54 and a plurality of rear wiring boards 52 are mounted to the back panel 51 via the rear connectors 55. The Uzuka et al. patent does not disclose the communication between the front and rear wiring boards 53, 52 and the back panel 51 as being fixed or configurable, let alone as being configurable by a signal processing means.

In rejecting claims 1-6, the Examiner finds the motherboard 404 of the Green et al. patent as corresponding to the "base unit" of the claims and the memory expansion cards 402 of the Green et al. patent as corresponding to the "pluggable electrical unit" of the claims. As set forth above, however, the Green et al. patent does not disclose the communication between the memory expansion cards 402 and the motherboard 404 as being fixed or configurable, let alone as being configurable by the CPU 102. Thus, the Green et al. patent fails to show or suggest (with emphasis added):

a "*permanently configured line (41)*" and a "*freely configurable line (42)*", wherein "*the direction of signal transmission and the logical signal assignment of the freely configurable line **being determined in accordance with the identity of the pluggable electrical unit (2) by the signal processing means (12)***", as is presently recited in amended independent claim 1; and

a "*base contact device*" having a "*first group of contacts*" and a "*second group of contacts*", wherein "*the direction of signal transmission and the*

logical signal assignment for each contact of the second group of contacts is configured by the signal processing means based on the identity of the pluggable electrical unit connected to the base contact device", as is recited in new independent claim 7.

For at least these reasons, Applicant submits that the Green et al. patent fails to show or suggest independent claims 1 and 7 and, thus, claims 2-5 and 8-14, which depend from claim 1 or claim 7. Since the Uzuka et al. patent does not disclose the communication between the memory expansion cards 402 and the motherboard 404 as being fixed or configurable, let alone as being configurable by signal processing means, the Uzuka et al. patent fails to cure the deficiencies of the Green et al. patent. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claims 1-5 and 7-14 are patentable over the Green et al. patent and the Uzuka et al. patent, individually and in combination.

Applicant believes the foregoing fully addresses the Examiner's rejection of the claims, however, Applicant would like to address the statement made by the Examiner with regard to the "permanently configured lines" and "freely configurable lines" recited in the claims, namely the Examiners statement that:

"In so far as the connection in the first group being permanent and that in the second group being configurable lines, the disclosed device of Green in view of Uzuka et al. is capable of providing the function. Also, it should be noted that the computers are known to be provided with re-configuration of pluggable devices and that some of the circuit connections between the receiving connector and the processor and memory chips, clock, etc. on the back plane or mother board are permanent."

Applicant believes that the Examiner's comment with regard to the device of Green in view of Uzuka being "capable of providing the function" was motivated by the "intended" language that was used in the un-amended claims, which has been

removed by the current amendments. Nonetheless, Applicant would like to note that although a prior art device "*may be capable of being modified to run the way the apparatus is claimed, there must be a suggestion or motivation in the reference to do so.*" In re Mills, 916 F.2d 680, 16 USPQ2d 1430 (Fed. Cir. 1990). There is absolutely no suggestion or motivation in the Green et al. patent or the Uzuka et al. patent to modify the apparatus of the Green et al. patent/Uzuka et al. patent to provide a "permanently configured line" and a "freely configurable line", as required by the claims.

With regard to the Examiner's recitation of allegedly commonly known technology, Applicant is not sure if the Examiner is using this allegedly known technology to reject the claims. If the Examiner is indeed using this allegedly known technology to reject the claims, Applicant hereby traverses the examiner's assertion of common knowledge and hereby requests the Examiner to produce documentary support for the allegedly known technology and to more specifically apply the allegedly known technology to the claims.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 050877.

Respectfully submitted,

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